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## The important lessons: Why ‘the new urban crisis’ is a victim of the new urbanism’s own success



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Peter J. Thompson/National Post

This week’s non-fiction book of the week is *The New Urban Crisis: How Our Cities Are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class – and What We Can Do About It*, by Richard Florida. For Lesson #2, [click here](#).

### Lesson #1: What is the “new urban crisis”?

The University of Toronto’s urban theorist Richard Florida is best known to many for his 2002 book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, which predicted future economic growth as the result of creativity and innovation rather than raw materials and industrial models of the past.

He has faced [some criticism](#) for somewhat utopian views, and the new millennium has indeed brought its own reality check. But Florida has been more than willing to revisit the topic, and his new book, *The New Urban Crisis*, attempts to reconcile many of these issues.

Florida describes the “new urban crisis” as different in character from the urban crisis of the 1960s and 1970s, which was marked by a decline in the core industries of urban centres and degradation of their tax base – and resulting increase of most negative socioeconomic indexes (crime, poverty, drug abuse, infant mortality).

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In many ways, the new crisis is a victim of the new urbanism's own success, and according to Florida, it has five major dimensions: 1) the economic gap between "superstar cities" and the rest, 2) unaffordable housing prices, 3) growing inequality and segregation within all cities, 4) the replication of former urban problems in the suburbs, 5) the rapid urbanization of the developing world, which is not taking place along the same lines of economic growth as in the past.

*Tomorrow's lesson: The good, the bad and the ugly when it comes to superstar cities.*



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